

16 September 1952
3:30 PM

Mr. Dulles:

Mr. McKay Donkin of the AEC called saying an announcement had just come in on the ticker and that he thought you would want to see it. He gave it to me over the phone as follows:

CHAPEL HILL, NORTH CAROLINA. SEPTEMBER 16, 1952.

"THE U.S. IS PLANNING AN EXPLOSION GREATER THAN HAS EVER BEEN SET OFF BEFORE," THE ACTING CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT ATOMIC ENERGY COMMITTEE DISCLOSED TODAY. CARL DURHAM, ACTING CHAIRMAN SINCE THE DEATH OF BRIAN McMAHON SAID THE TESTS PLANNED AT ENIWETOK ATOLL THIS FALL WILL "OPEN UP THE GRAVEST ERA IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD." IT HAS BEEN SPECULATED THAT IN MOVING THE SITE OF THE FALL ATOMIC TEST FROM THE NEVADA DESERT TO ENIWETOK MEANS THAT THE U. S. IS READY TO TEST THE FIRST HYDROGEN BOMB BUT DURHAM SAID HE COULD NOT CONFIRM THIS. DURHAM SAID SUPER SECRECY SURROUNDS THE TESTS AND HE IS NOT AT LIBERTY TO DISCLOSE THE NATURE OF THOSE TESTS. HE SAID THE TEST WILL BE A "STATIONARY ONE" AND THAT THE BOMB WILL NOT BE DROPPED. HE ALSO SAID THAT NO MAJOR WAR SHIPS WILL BE BLOWN UP IN THE TEST. THE EXACT DATE OF THE TEST WILL DEPEND UPON WEATHER AND OTHER CONDITIONS. ONLY A FEW TOP SCIENTISTS AND OBSERVERS WILL ATTEND. "IF THEY ARE SUCCESSFUL HE SAID THERE WILL BE AN EXPLOSION GREATER THAN HAS EVER BEEN SET OFF BEFORE."